

LISTING OF CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A vacuum tumbler for marinating food products within a liquid, the vacuum tumbler comprising:
 - a container having an interior wall, said interior wall defining a chamber for containing the liquid, the chamber defining a longitudinal axis extending therethrough;
 - a rib extending inwardly from said interior wall generally toward the longitudinal axis at least one-quarter of the distance across said chamber;
 - a drive for moving the container so that the rib brings the food products into and out of contact with the liquid; and
 - a vacuum source for creating a partial vacuum within said chamber.
2. (Original) The tumbler of claim 1 wherein said drive rotates said container about an axis of rotation and said rib extends toward said axis of rotation.
3. (Currently Amended) The tumbler of claim 2 wherein said rib is in a plane with the axis of rotation.
4. (Original) The tumbler of claim 1 wherein the tumbler includes only a single rib.
5. (Original) The tumbler of claim 1 wherein said rib is perforated.
6. (Withdrawn) The tumbler of claim 1 wherein said container is spherical.
7. (Original) The tumbler of claim 1 wherein said chamber is cylindrical.
8. (Currently Amended) The tumbler of claim 7 wherein said ~~chamber includes a longitudinal axis, said drive rotating~~ rotates said container about said longitudinal axis.
9. (Currently Amended) The tumbler of claim 8 wherein said rib is in a plane with said longitudinal axis and said rib extends at least one-half of the radius of said chamber across said chamber.

10. (Original) The tumbler of claim 9 wherein said rib extends a distance across said chamber approximately equal to the radius of said chamber.

11. (Original) The tumbler of claim 10 wherein said chamber has a length in the direction of said longitudinal axis, and wherein said rib extends substantially the entire length of said chamber.

12. (Withdrawn) The tumbler of claim 7 wherein said chamber includes a longitudinal axis, said drive rotating said container about an axis of rotation that is substantially perpendicular with said longitudinal axis.

13. (Withdrawn) The tumbler of claim 12 wherein said rib extends entirely across said chamber.

14. (Original) The tumbler of claim 1 wherein said rib is part of an insert secured to said interior wall.

15. (Original) The tumbler of claim 14 wherein said insert includes a mounting section having an inner surface, an outer surface, said outer surface being shaped to mate with a portion of said interior wall within said container and said rib extending from said inner surface into said chamber, said mounting section also including opposing edges with extensions projecting from said opposing edges into said chamber, said container including projections extending inward from said interior wall into said chamber such that said extensions on said mounting section are compressed between said projections.

16. (Withdrawn) A method of marinating food products, said method comprising:
loading the food products into a container;
partially filling the container with a marinating liquid;
creating a partial vacuum within the container; and
maneuvering the food products to alternately expose substantially all of the food products to the marinating liquid and to the partial vacuum.

17. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 16 wherein said maneuvering the food product to alternately expose substantially all of the food products to the marinating liquid and the partial vacuum includes rotating the container about an axis of rotation.

18. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 17 wherein the chamber is cylindrical and includes a longitudinal axis that is substantially aligned with the axis of rotation during said rotating the container about an axis of rotation.

19. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 17 wherein the chamber is cylindrical and includes a longitudinal axis that is substantially perpendicular to the axis of rotation during said rotating the container about an axis of rotation.

20. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 16 wherein said maneuvering the food product to alternately expose substantially all of the food products to the marinating liquid and the partial vacuum includes moving the food products up and down.

21. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 20 wherein said moving the food product up and down to alternately expose substantially all of the food products to the marinating liquid and the partial vacuum includes placing the food product on a shelf and moving the shelf up and down.

22. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 21 wherein said moving the food product up and down to alternately expose substantially all of the food products to the marinating liquid and the partial vacuum includes adjusting the shelf up and down along a vertical axis.

23. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 16 wherein all of the food products are removed from the liquid at one time during said maneuvering the food products to alternately expose substantially all of the food products to the marinating liquid and to the partial vacuum.

24. (Currently Amended) A device for marinating food products within a liquid, the device comprising:

a container having an interior wall defining a chamber for containing the liquid;

a shelf extending away from the interior wall and through the chamber across at least a quarter of the distance ~~partially~~ across said chamber in the direction the shelf extends away from the interior wall;

a drive for maneuvering said shelf to bring the food products into and out of contact with the liquid; and

a vacuum source for creating a partial vacuum within said chamber.

25. (Original) The device of claim 24 wherein said shelf is perforated.

26. (Original) The device of claim 25 wherein said shelf extends across said entire chamber.

27. (Withdrawn) The device of claim 24 wherein said container is cylindrical.

28. (Withdrawn) The device of claim 24 wherein said shelf moves relative to said container.

29. (Withdrawn) The device of claim 28 wherein said container includes a substantially vertical axis, said drive reciprocatingly maneuvering said shelf along said axis.

30. (Withdrawn) The device of claim 29 wherein said shelf is substantially perpendicular to said axis.

31. (Withdrawn) The device of claim 28 wherein said shelf moves up and down.

Add the following new claims:

32. (New) The tumbler of claim 1 wherein the rib is substantially planar.

33. (New) The device of claim 24 wherein the shelf is connected to the interior wall.

34. (New) The device of claim 24 wherein the drive rotates the container about an axis of rotation and the shelf extends generally toward the axis of rotation.

35. (New) The device of claim 34 wherein the shelf is in a plane with the axis of rotation.

36. (New) The device of claim 24 wherein the device includes only a single shelf.

37. (New) The device of claim 24 wherein the shelf is perforated.

38. (New) The device of claim 24 wherein the chamber is cylindrical.

39. (New) The device of claim 38 wherein the chamber includes a longitudinal axis, the drive rotating the container about the longitudinal axis.

40. (New) The device of claim 39 wherein the shelf is in a plane with the longitudinal axis and the shelf extends at least one-half of the radius of the chamber across the chamber.

41. (New) The device of claim 40 wherein the shelf extends a distance across the chamber approximately equal to the radius of the chamber.

42. (New) The device of claim 39 wherein the chamber has a length in the direction of the longitudinal axis, and wherein the shelf extends substantially the entire length of the chamber.

43. (New) The device of claim 24 wherein the shelf is part of an insert secured to the interior wall.

44. (New) The device of claim 43 wherein the insert includes a mounting section having an inner surface, an outer surface, the outer surface being shaped to mate with a portion of the interior wall within the container and the shelf extending from the inner surface into the chamber, the mounting section also including opposing edges with extensions projecting from the opposing edges into the chamber, the container including projections extending inward from the interior wall into the chamber such that the extensions on the mounting section are compressed between the projections.

45. (New) The device of claim 24 wherein the shelf is substantially planar.

46. (New) A vacuum tumbler for marinating food products within a liquid, the vacuum tumbler comprising:

a container for supporting the food products, the container being partially filled with a marinating liquid;

a vacuum source for creating a partial vacuum within the container; and

a drive for maneuvering the container to alternately expose substantially all of the food products to the marinating liquid and to the partial vacuum.

47. (New) The vacuum tumbler of claim 46 wherein the container has an interior wall, the interior wall defining a chamber for containing the liquid, the chamber defining a longitudinal axis extending therethrough, and further comprising a rib extending inwardly from the interior wall generally toward the longitudinal axis at least one-quarter of the distance across the chamber.

48. (New) The vacuum tumbler of claim 47 wherein the drive moves the container so that the rib brings the food products into and out of contact with the liquid.

49. (New) The vacuum tumbler of claim 46 wherein the chamber defines a longitudinal axis extending therethrough, and wherein the container is rotatable about the longitudinal axis to alternately expose substantially all of the food products to the marinating liquid.

50. (New) The vacuum tumbler of claim 46 and further comprising a shelf extending through the container, the shelf maneuvering the food product to alternately expose substantially all of the food products to the marinating liquid.

51. (New) The vacuum tumbler of claim 46 and further comprising a shelf extending through the container, the shelf removing all of the food products from the liquid at one time to alternately expose substantially all of the food products to the marinating liquid and to the partial vacuum.

52. (New) The vacuum tumbler of claim 46 wherein the container has an interior wall defining a chamber for containing the liquid, and further comprising a shelf extending away from the interior wall and through the chamber across at least a quarter of the distance across the chamber in the direction the shelf extends away from the interior wall.

53. (New) The vacuum tumbler of claim 52, wherein the drive maneuvers the shelf to bring the food products into and out of contact with the liquid.